

### Complex thinking and divergent thinking: dialogue between Morin and Rodari for teaching literature

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## 1 Introduction

The aim of this paper is to examine a crosstalk between the views of Edgar Morin and Gianni Rodari, investigating how that dialogue can influence school practices in teaching literary reading and writing to the initial years of Elementary School.

## 2 Development

Initially, we discuss the characteristics of both scholars. Morin's complex thinking (2011, 2015a, 2025b) proposes freeing reasoning from formal constraints to foster critical and creative thinking, favoring the idea of movement, process, and possibility of being. Reading and writing are interlaced actions, essential to literary text creation, as a recursive interplay, once a cause produces an effect, and this effect induces another cause. Reading entices innovative ideas for text creation and writing a text can lead to novel reading. These are nonlinear actions, circular and complex, interconnected and linked to a context.

Rodari's divergent thinking (1982) advocates that human mind needs antagonism and contradiction for its development and to part from linear logic, in tune with complex thinking. Playful ways are the structural axis for Rodari's concepts, fostering active involvement of children, reception of their ideas and doubts. He supports the development of children's imagination to promote self-expression in a creative manner, and to benefit from divergent thinking. Conversely, "errors" found in children's writing, are not errors in fact, but are key to expand literary strategies in character and scenario creation. Rodari's "The Grammar of Fantasy (1982) describes several proposals, developed with children to create narratives, deconstruct known words and routine scenery, in a challenging and ludic environment.

The second part of the paper reports and analyses four diverse experiments in ethnographic research conducted by two teacher-researchers oriented by the principal investigator, as part of the Graduate Program in Education at Universidade Federal do Parana. This type of ethnographic approach has been appropriate to uncover innovative transformation in real world settings, developing theories based on empiric

knowledge, more than to test well established theories. The research involved students from classes of three Elementary Schools: two in the state capital, Curitiba, one in a city of Curitiba metropolitan area, Pinhais, State of Parana, in Brazil.

A sequence of workshops of literary writing was offered by a teacher-researcher to sixth grade students (12-13 years of age) at a public municipal school in Curitiba during 2023. One workshop was inspired by Rodari's "Arbitrary Prefix". Participants played a "Tic Tac Toe" game with prefixes. They recollected examples of prefixes, and in a ludic form, created new terms, as in "hyper-alone", "mega-birthday", "anti-patience", "post-rain", "ex-laziness". Still in this workshop, the elaboration of visual poems was the igniting factor, reading the book *Aguardados* (Bastos, 2012). Visual and verbal language interplay in that story, enticing sensitivity and reasoning alike. The poem of a student-author was analyzed by colleagues, revealing her creative initiative, association with everyday life, and daring to write about emotions common to her age. The dynamics of arbitrary prefix fostered use of personal experiences, and promoted creation liberty, authorship of unprecedented scenes and surpassing the understanding of school exercise as a pattern.

A second workshop used artificial intelligence (AI) in writing and rewriting. A model class was introduced by the teacher-researcher, followed by seven classes with reading, writing, and rewriting with AI app, and critical reading of text by colleagues. Students perceived those texts presented by "Chat Bing" had frequent paraphrastic repetitions, did not offer a variety of paraphrases for a same saying, and excelled in bland narratives. This experiment multiplied possibilities of reviewing and rewriting actions, while stimulating innovative ideas in students.

Another teacher-researcher held an experiment in diverse thinking at a private school in Curitiba with fifth graders (10-11 years of age) during 2024. A video of natural scenery from Nordic countries motivated students. They explored Jørn Riel's book in Portuguese translation - *The Boy Who Wanted to Be a Human Being* (2008), collecting information from the covers, the synopsis, the author, and his life in Greenland. The book reports on a historical adventure, detailing a Viking boy named Leiv who is shipwrecked near Greenland, is rescued by Inuit siblings, and taken in by

their community, learning to adapt to their way of life, and discovering friendship and tolerance by means of their bond. They also watched a documentary on Vikings and their culture to establish their historical time. The narrative was withheld on Chapter 10, when Leiv survives the wreck and reaches a cold and distant island (Greenland). Students were challenged by Rodari's "What happens next?" to create a story sequence, including natural scenery, cultural environment, way of life, family relationships, and eating habits. The process favored students and the teacher-researcher experiencing partition in writing as well as involvement in probing and proposing to the written texts. The student-author then read the observations, expressed consent or dissent, and rewrote the stories.

The same teacher-researcher undertook another experiment in literary writing with a class of second graders (7-8 years of age) at a school in Pinhais during 2025. Daily reading and text discussion sessions, valuing texts produced by students as a whole – story, scenario, characters, inclusion of student's text in the class library, stimulating the desire to author stories and gaining admiration of colleagues motivated literary writing.

The proposition of reading, writing, and rewriting in this paper, based on the dialogue between principles of Morin's complex thinking and Rodari's divergent thinking, contributed to strengthening the interactions among student-authors and teacher-researchers in developing literary writing and formation of autonomous readers and authors.

Divergent thinking was key for literary expression of students, enabling student-authors to create a path to a new narrative after a "what if...". It also influenced teacher-researchers to see errors as part of the creating process.

Complex thinking favored reflexive opportunities in text production generated by dialogue between students and teacher-researcher, and in a recursive form, reinforcing a favorable environment to interchange ideas, to self-eco-organize and to implement practices for reading and writing.

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Bearing in mind the complexity of this knowledge, this research valued the entire process of reading and writing, not solely the final text version of the student-author. The results point to formation of readers and writers capable of parting from established patterns and developing an author's behavior during activities, perceived through strategies sought during plot production, the disposition to re-elaborate and use creative errors.

Teacher-researchers identified by an attentive examination of the process that student-authors incorporated previous knowledge and readings, in a retroactive movement, shared interpretations and writing processes, worked on rewriting, foresaw a reader for their text, and felt belonging to a reading community.

### 3 Conclusion

In conclusion, we advocate for an education that tolerates errors, treats them with creativity, and encourages reflection, interpretation, interaction, and creative capacities<sup>1</sup>.

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**1** Grammatical correction carried out by: Angela Maria Hoffmann Walesko, PhD in Letters, Federal University of Paraná, 2019; specialization in English Language Teaching Methodology, 2000. Email: [angelawalesko@gmail.com](mailto:angelawalesko@gmail.com)

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